Small Grant Application Guidance

This guide outlines everything we need to see in a funding application.
Before you start, please read this guide so that you have an idea of what we are looking for in your application.

The MCF Small Grant programme offers unrestricted funding to charities where the majority of service users are within one of the MCF's target support groups. Unfortunately, we do not offer funding under this programme for specific projects where most of the whole charity's service users are not within one of the target groups.

If you are applying as a branch using the head office's registered charity number, please also ensure that you have to hand:

- The latest published accounts together with the independent examiner's/auditor's report that were submitted to the Charity Commission under the registered charity number
- If you have your own accounts, please submit these as supporting information to help us understand your particular branch
- Written permission from head office to use the main charity registration number to apply

We are only able to accept one application per charity number and re-application rules will apply to that number, regardless of whether a different branch of the charity or head office applies under the same registration number.

General advice before you start your application

- Please detail all services that your charity provides, even if not all of them fit the target group. We need to understand your charity as a whole.
- Try writing out the application in Word and then copying and pasting into the application form, this will make it easier to edit if you need to.
- Even if you have applied to us before, please write your application as if it's for a new audience.
- Keep it simple and include the key points, avoiding jargon.
- If using acronyms, please explain what they are for the first time so that we know what they mean.
- Ensure that your figures add up – check and triple check.
- You don't have to use all of the word count and avoid repetition. Remember, we read lots of applications and it really helps us if you are concise. Similarly, please think about the formatting so it's not just one long paragraph.
- Ask someone who doesn't know your organisation to read your application – does it make sense? Can they get a picture of what your organisation does? Can they identify the key points?

- Make sure that the Charity Commission number and your contact details are correct so that we are able to get in touch with you.
- Please ensure that you have your latest published charity accounts to upload and ensure that they are signed – this will reduce any delays.
- Please complete the application form in full and don't rely on supporting documents. You can upload up to two to support your application, for example evaluation reports, impact report, annual report and case studies. If you choose to upload a document, please reference its purpose in your application.
- Please check that the whole form has been completed, incomplete forms will not be assessed.
- We may have to bring the deadline forward if we receive a very high volume of applications. We advise that you check our website regularly in case the deadline has changed. https://mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities/application-deadlines/

Small Grants Application Form:

About Your Charity

1. **When was your charity established?**

   This is the year that the charity was formed. e.g. 1985

2. **Which of the MCF Target Groups does your charity help?**

   The majority of your organisation' service users must primarily fit one of the following target groups to meet eligibility requirements:

- Creating the Best Start in Life for Disadvantaged Children and Young People
- Reducing Isolation in Later Life (targeted at socially isolated older people over the age of 50 years)

  For more information on each of the target groups, please visit our Application Resources page

3. **Please provide a brief description of your charity and its work –** (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

   We are looking for a snapshot of your organisation, similar to how you would introduce your charity in conversation. Think of "What, Who, Why and How" to help summarise what your organisation does, the need it is addressing, who you are helping and how. This could include the following:

- What is the main purpose of your organisation? E.g. a local charity for isolated older people providing befriending and lunch clubs; mentoring for disengaged young people; specialist early years group for disabled toddlers; friendship and activity groups for isolated older people, etc.

- Who do you help? E.g. – socially isolated older people, disabled children, young carers, disengaged young people, etc. We do not need a lot of detail at this time as there is an opportunity further on in the application for you to do this
- Why do they need help? What are the issues they are facing?
- How you deliver the service? E.g. face to face, telephone helpline, email etc.

4. **Where in England and/or Wales does your charity work? Please note that the MCF only funds organisations where the beneficiaries are in England and/or Wales.**

   This information helps us to build an overall picture of your organisation i.e. is your organisation a local or community charity, or do you work across a larger area. Please include:
- Villages, towns or cities where your organisation operates
- County or Counties where the charity works
- Size does not matter - the outcome of the application does not depend on how big or small your organisation is

5. **How many Staff and Volunteers does the charity have across all the locations it is based?**
   This includes how many full time and part time staff as well as volunteers you have working in your organisation.

Organisational Financial Information

   We are aware that the information we ask for may not necessarily match how your charity's accounts are prepared, however we require this so that we can ensure that we have all the information we need.

- We do require you to complete the form as it is laid out
- The financial information submitted on the form must match the latest published accounts on the Charity Commission
- It may be helpful for you to request assistance from your organisation's finance department or accountant in order that this section of the application form is completed correctly
- Please ensure that your figures add up correctly

   We have a comprehensive guide to help you complete the financial details and we encourage you to use it to ensure that the form is completed correctly.

   The guide can be found here. https://mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities/application-resources/financial-information-guidelines/

About the Grant Request

8. What is the value of the grant you wish to apply for and over how many years?

- The maximum number of years funding available is 3 years
- You will see that we have broken this down into: Amount requested Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. This will make up the total of the amount you wish to apply for
- The maximum you can apply for is £5,000 per year or 15% of your average income over the last 2 years, whichever is the smallest. For example, if your charity's average income over the last two years was £80,000, the maximum grant you can apply for is £12,000, so £4,000 per year for 3 years
- The minimum grant offered is £1,000

9. Who does your charity help and what are their needs? (Max 1,050 characters – approximately 150 words)

This section is for you to describe in more detail who you help, why they need help and why this is important. Some helpful prompts:

- Who are your beneficiaries – i.e. children, families, older people, the age ranges of your beneficiaries
- What issues or challenges are they experiencing
- The need your charity is addressing and why it is important
- Evidence of the need – you can use statistics and figures. It is helpful to use information that is from within the geographical area/s in which you work and not just national figures.
- The demand for your services, if there are any waiting lists, gaps in service provision in the area, current levels of service user numbers
- How you target appropriate beneficiaries – e.g. isolated older people – how do you know they are isolated? Disadvantaged children and young people – what disadvantages are they experiencing and how are they identified?
- How are beneficiaries referred to you? e.g. social services, health professionals, NHS, other voluntary organisations

10. What services and/or activities do you provide? Please include pre-COVID-19 as well as what you currently offer. (Max 1,400 characters, approximately 200 words)

Please ensure that all services are included, not just those that are relevant to the target group.
- What type of services are provided? E.g. art therapy/classes, drama therapy/classes, complementary therapies, counselling sessions, practical support (and what this consists of), emotional support, home visits, drop-in advice, etc.
- How long are the sessions, visits, etc. and the frequency of contact
- How long does support continue for or is it unlimited?
- How is the service delivered? E.g. face to face, telephone, online etc.
- Do you use volunteers? If so, are they are trained, supported, DBS checked etc.

- Who delivers or facilitates the services and activities, e.g. key workers, specialists, or a ratio of volunteers to trained staff
- How have these services changed due to COVID-19? E.g. activities are being delivered remotely, some projects are on hold etc.

11. Do you currently charge for any of the services you provide? (Max 1050 characters – approximately 150 words)

This helps us to establish how the services are funded. Please include:

- If there are any charges for services/activities and if so, what they are
- Even if these are voluntary – a description of the donations from service users is helpful
- Any membership fees and whether these are annual or monthly
- Whether there is a hardship policy in place for those that cannot afford to pay and what it is, including subsidised fees
- Please include how much it costs you to provide the service

12. a. How many unique service users does your organisation directly help each year?

We need to know how many individuals your whole organisation supports, not the number of sessions attended, hours of support, or just those that fit the target group.

b. Please explain how this has been calculated (max. 700 characters, approximately 150 words)

Due to the number of different ways organisations record user numbers, it is helpful to understand how you reach the figure provided. Please include a breakdown of how many of these services users fit within the target group.

13. What impact does your charity make and how do you measure this? (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

We need to understand the difference your organisation's work makes to those you help and how you measure your success. Please include:

- In what way do people benefit from your work
- Figures and statistics from any evaluations of your work
- What the short and long term changes are from the services/activities that beneficiaries access
- What form/s of monitoring/evaluation you undertake to assess the impact of your work e.g. surveys, or questionnaires
- Whether you work in partnership with any organisations to carry out evaluations of your services
- Feedback from service users or referral partners – you may wish to attach case studies but it is important to reference these in the application and please do not include any private or confidential information
- Any results from independent research into the area of your work

- Any information from other organisations delivering similar services

14. **How will this grant help you to better deliver your services?** (Max 1400 characters – approximately 200 words)
    Our small grants are unrestricted, if this is a multi-year grant, we will ask for a report at the end of each grant year to find out how the funding has helped and how it has made a difference. At the end of all grants, we will request an end of grant report summarising how the grant has helped your charity overall. This section will give us an idea of how you may use the funding to help your organisation.

- You may wish to use the funding for a specific purpose e.g. to make a service more sustainable, support a salary, purchase of resources or equipment, utilities and rent etc.
- How will this funding help to strengthen your organisation and allow you to be effective in your work?

15. **Have you ever received funding from a Masonic organisation?** (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

    This can include:
- Individual Lodges
- Provincial Masonic charities
  Please include the name of the donor organisation and the amount if known.
  N.B. This will not impact on your application in any way

16. **It is important that the MCF publicly recognises the generosity of its donors whilst also demonstrating how funds are spent - Please summarise what action you will take to promote your grant from the MCF.** (Max. 700 characters - approximately 100 words)

    This could include:
- Mentions in social media posts, website, newsletters, annual report
- Using the MCF logo where relevant – e.g. materials, flyers, press releases to local media outlets etc.
- Whether you would host a visit from local Freemasons to see your work and meet staff, volunteers and if appropriate, beneficiaries.
  N.B. If you are successful, a 'Promote your Grant' pack with template press releases and social media photo props to support your promotion efforts will be sent to you.

17. **How did you first hear about the availability of grants from the Masonic Charitable Foundation?**

    Please select the most suitable one from the list given.

18. **Is there anything further you would like to add to your application?** (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)
    E.g. your response to COVID-19. You may have already told us about this in your other answers, but there's more space here to expand if you wish.

You will also need your latest published charity accounts to hand to upload to the application. You may also upload 2 further supporting documents to support your application, e.g. outcomes of a successful pilot or evidence of the success of an existing/previous programme

If you have any questions, please visit our FAQs https://mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities/faqs/ or call the Charity Grants team on 020 3146 3337.

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